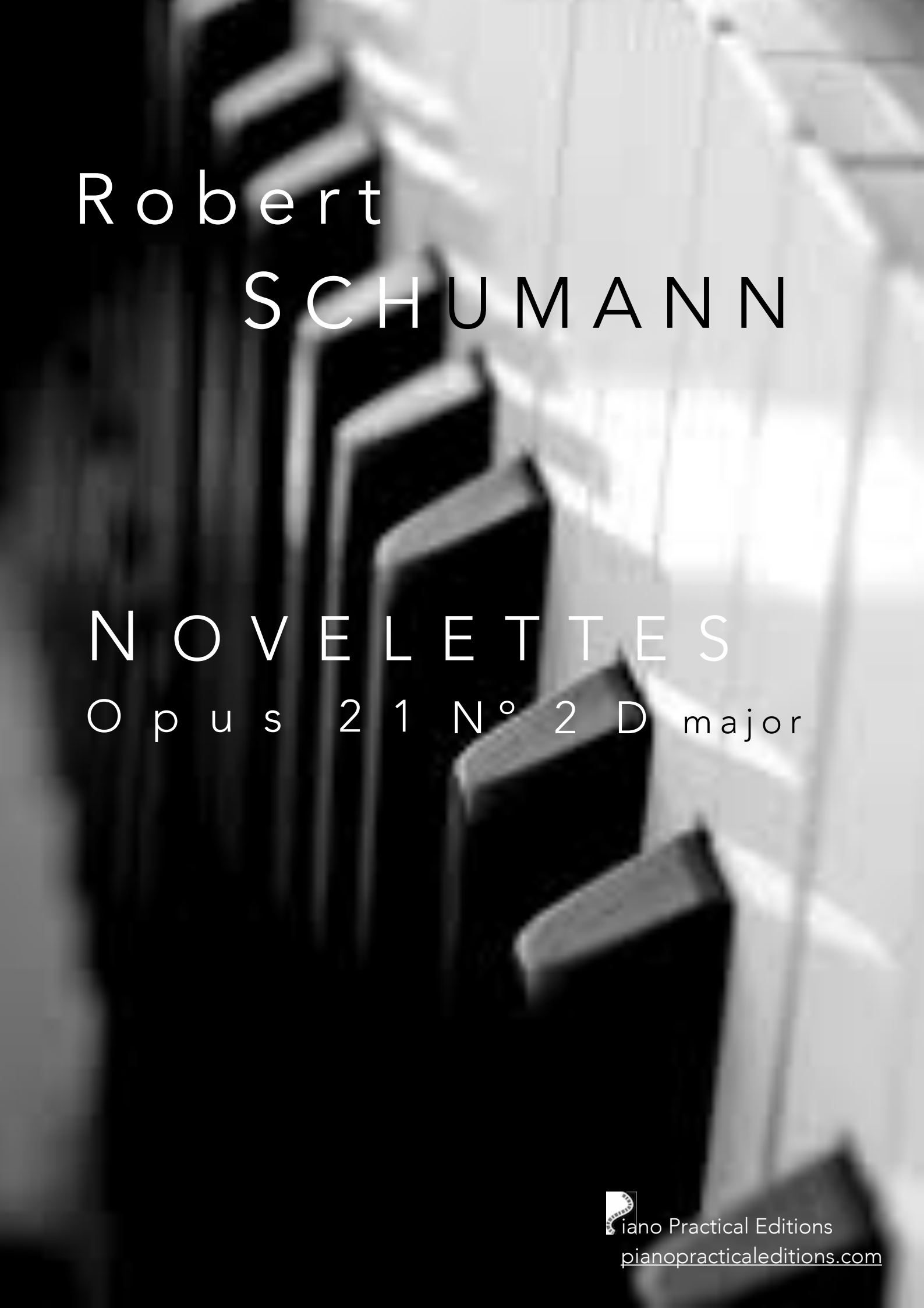

Robert SCHUMANN

NOVELETTES

Opus 21 N° 2 D major

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Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

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Robert SCHUMANN 1810 - 1856

NOVELETTES Opus 21 N° 2

At the age of 28, Schumann was an experienced composer, passionately in love with his ex-piano teacher's (Johann Gottlob Friedrich Wieck) 19-year old daughter Clara, and much of the inspired piano and vocal music he wrote before they were finally married in 1840 is an utterance of his yearning for her. In 1838 he composed Kreisleriana, Kinderszenen, Phantasie, Arabeske, and these eight *Novelletten* of which I have edited just three. They were dedicated to the pianist and composer Henselt and in a letter to Clara, Schumann wrote "I have composed with enormous passion a shocking amount for you, jests, stories, family scenes with fathers and a wedding — in short, the most amiable things; and have named the whole work *Novelletten* because *Wiecketten* is unattractive. They contain images of you in every possible setting and harmony, and in other ways in which you are irresistible!" Raised in the environment of a prominent book dealer, the title is altogether predictable.

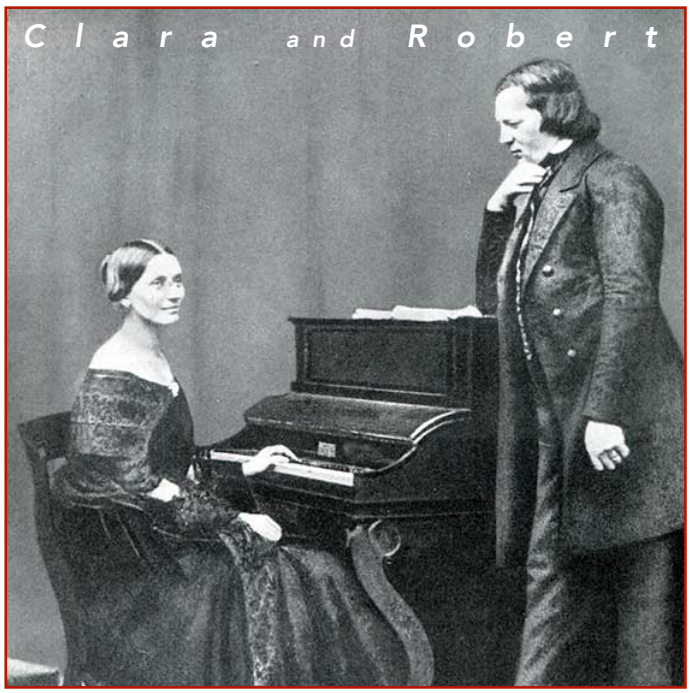
Op 21 N° 2 D major

A fast virtuoso piece in the style of a *toccata*, persisting characteristically with a Schumannesque dotted rhythm, intriguingly using staccato dots to show the melodic line. The composer cited characters from Goethe's late cycle of poems, the *West-östlicher Divan* —

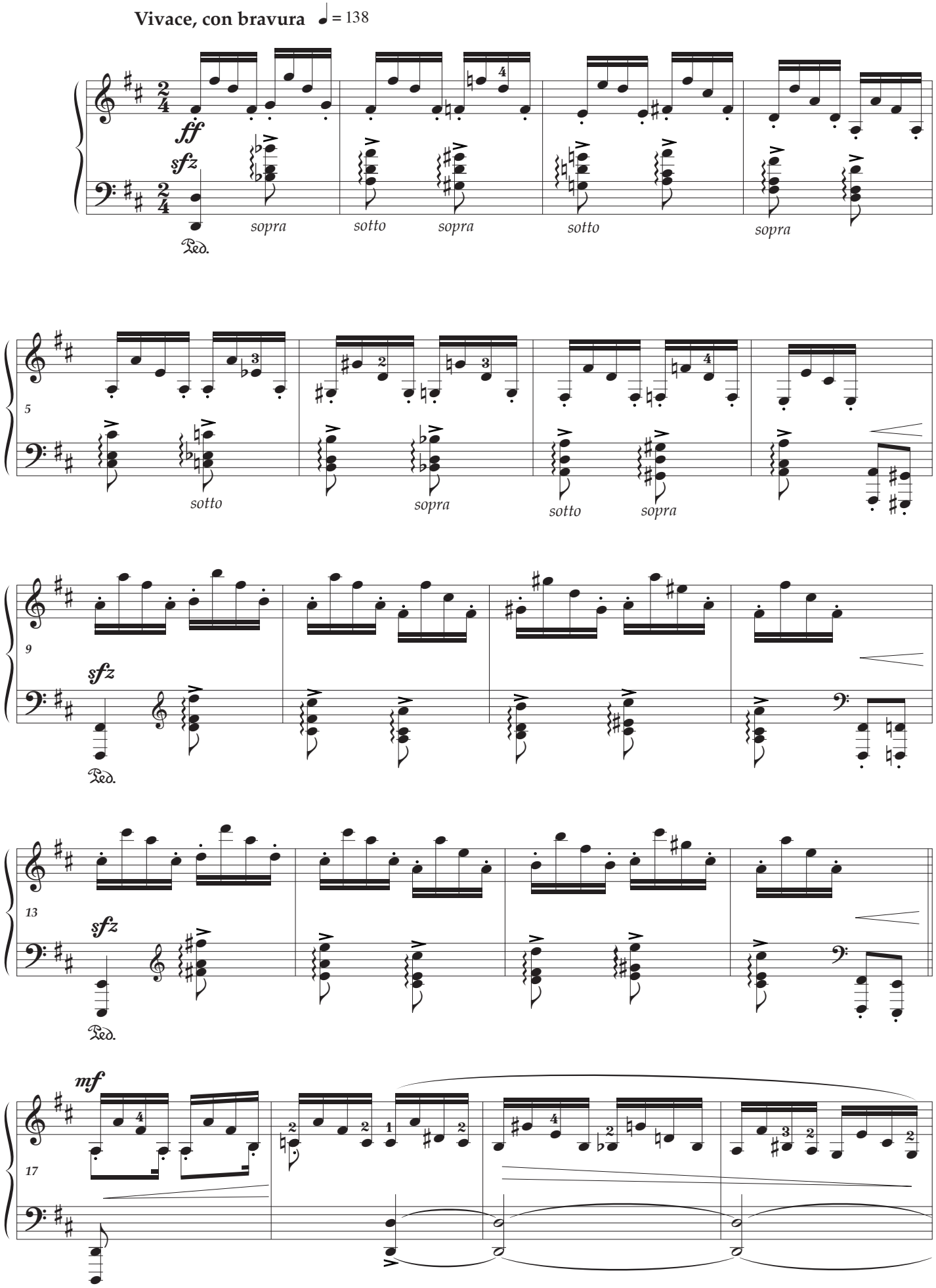
"*Sarazene und Suleika*" which were in turn Inspired by the Persian poet Hafez. Schumann sent the manuscript to Liszt, and heard him perform it in Leipzig, writing to Clara: "the 2nd *Novelette* gave me great joy; you can scarcely believe what an effect it makes. Liszt wants to play it in his third concert here, too." His extravagant pianism may perhaps have prompted the composer's blistering tempo instructions and speed for the A section — *Äusserst rasch und mit Bravour* — very fast, with brilliance. I wonder what Liszt made of the truly romantic central section where it is Suleika who takes over with inspired Arabian sensuality. Five years later in 1843, Persian mythology would again inspire Schumann in the composition of "Paradise and the Peri" op 50, an exquisite vocal work with orchestra.

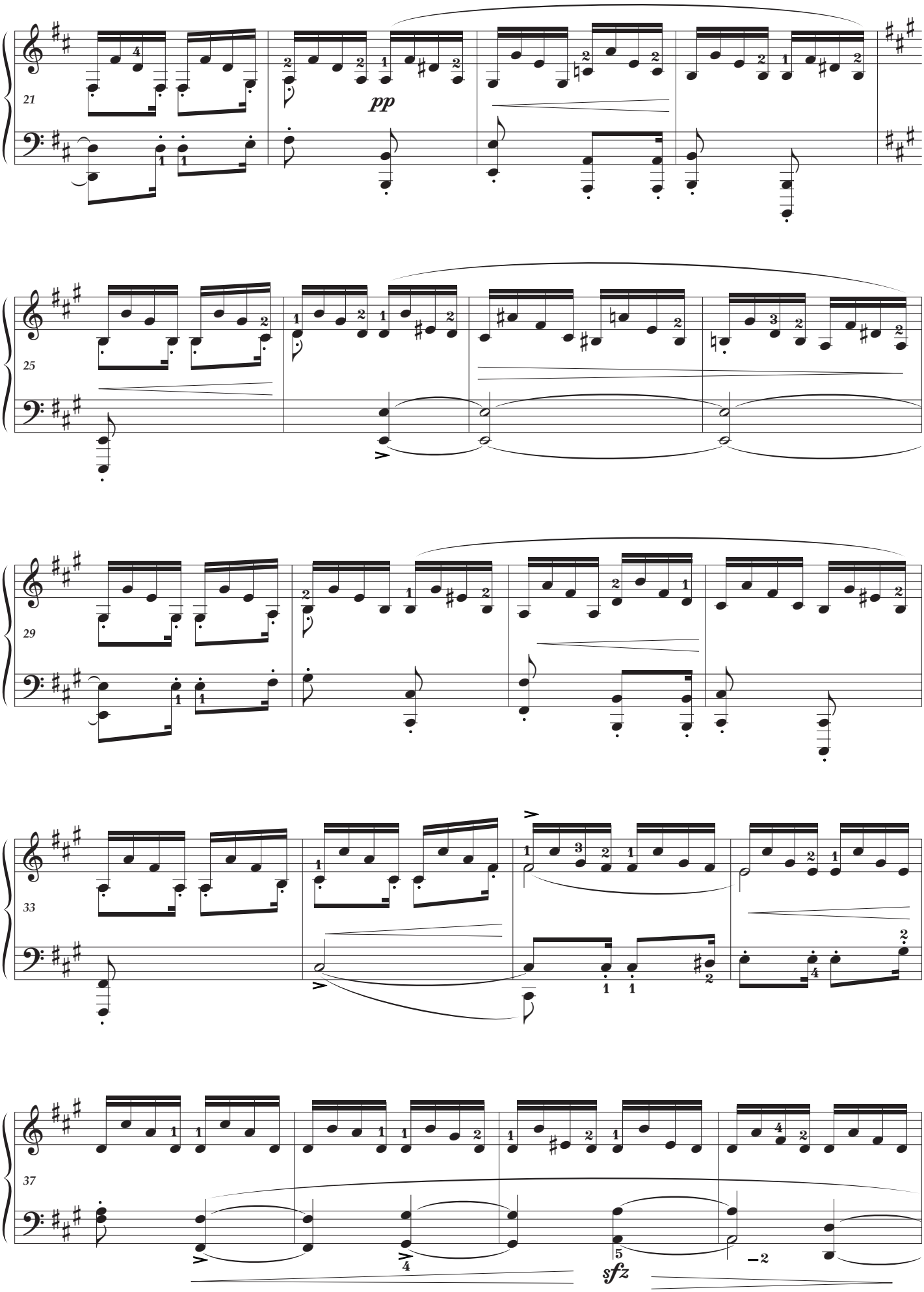
This revision was originally intended for my students and does contain a number of fairly radical ideas in editing. Written music is not precise data and my instinct as a pianist is often at odds with the original text — bar lines, tempi, dynamics, to name but a few. Music is a 'living' art and I believe that the moment when a composer's work is set out in print should not prevent its development.

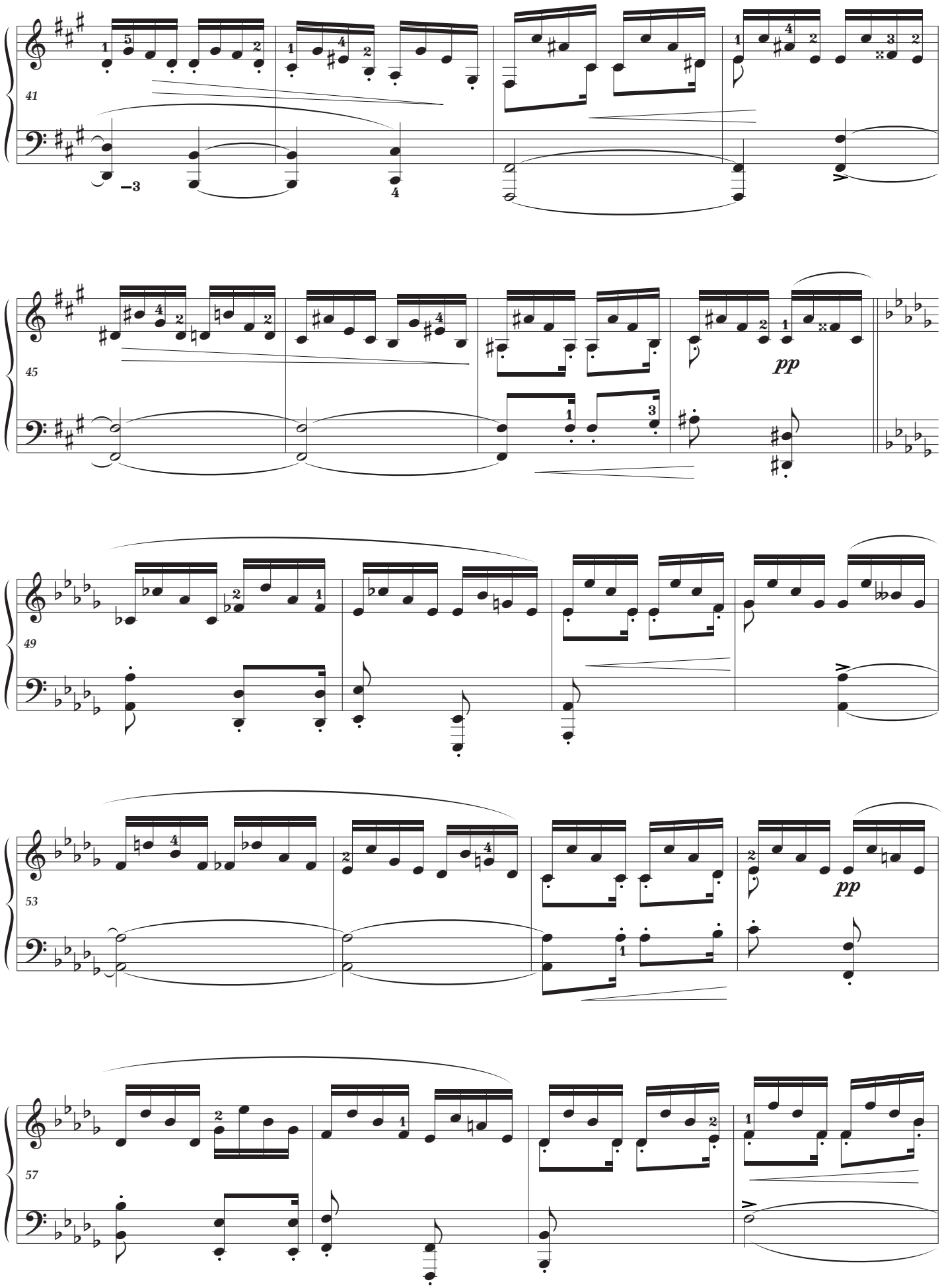
My other theory is that the somewhat tedious task of setting out musical text and proofreading

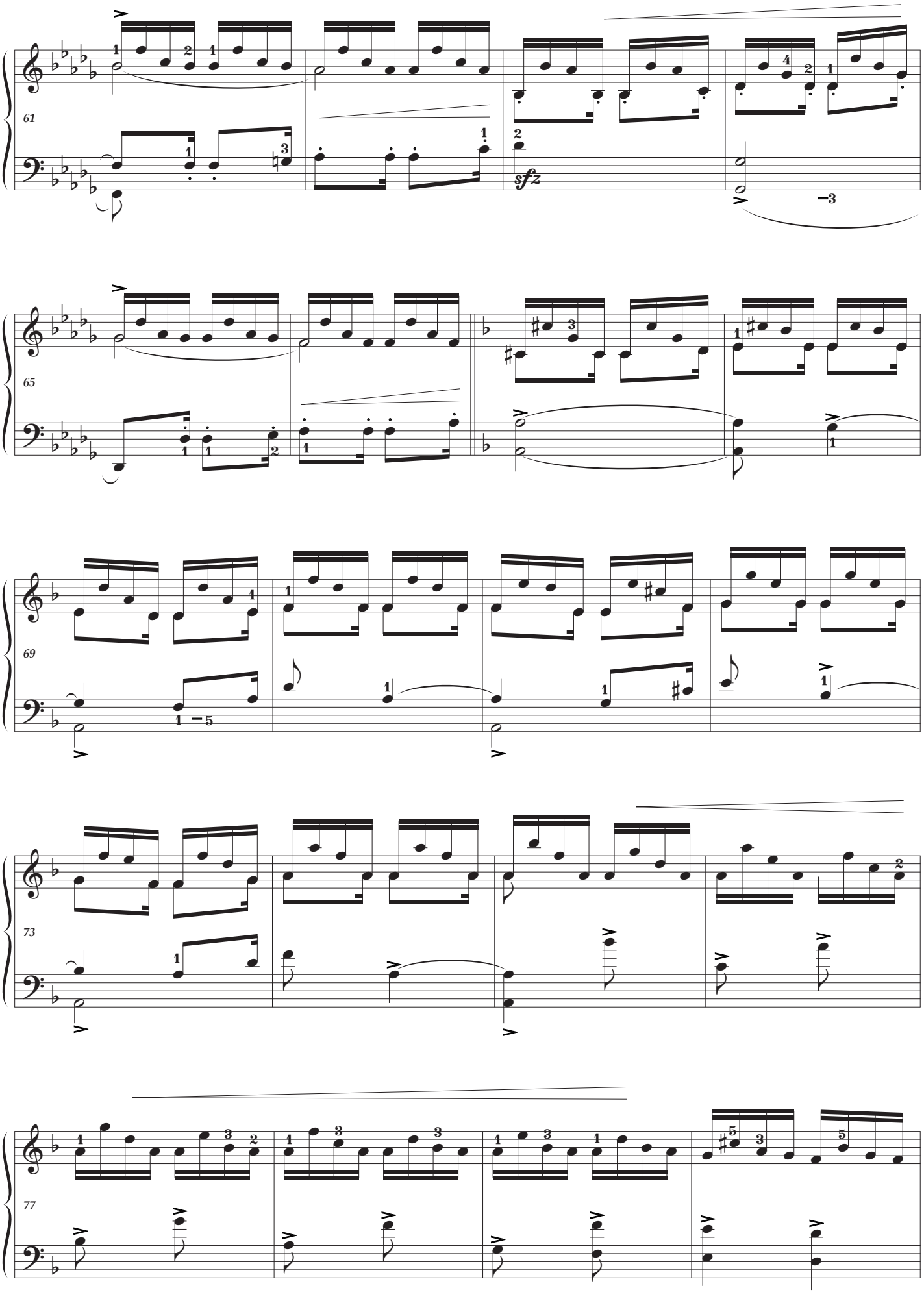


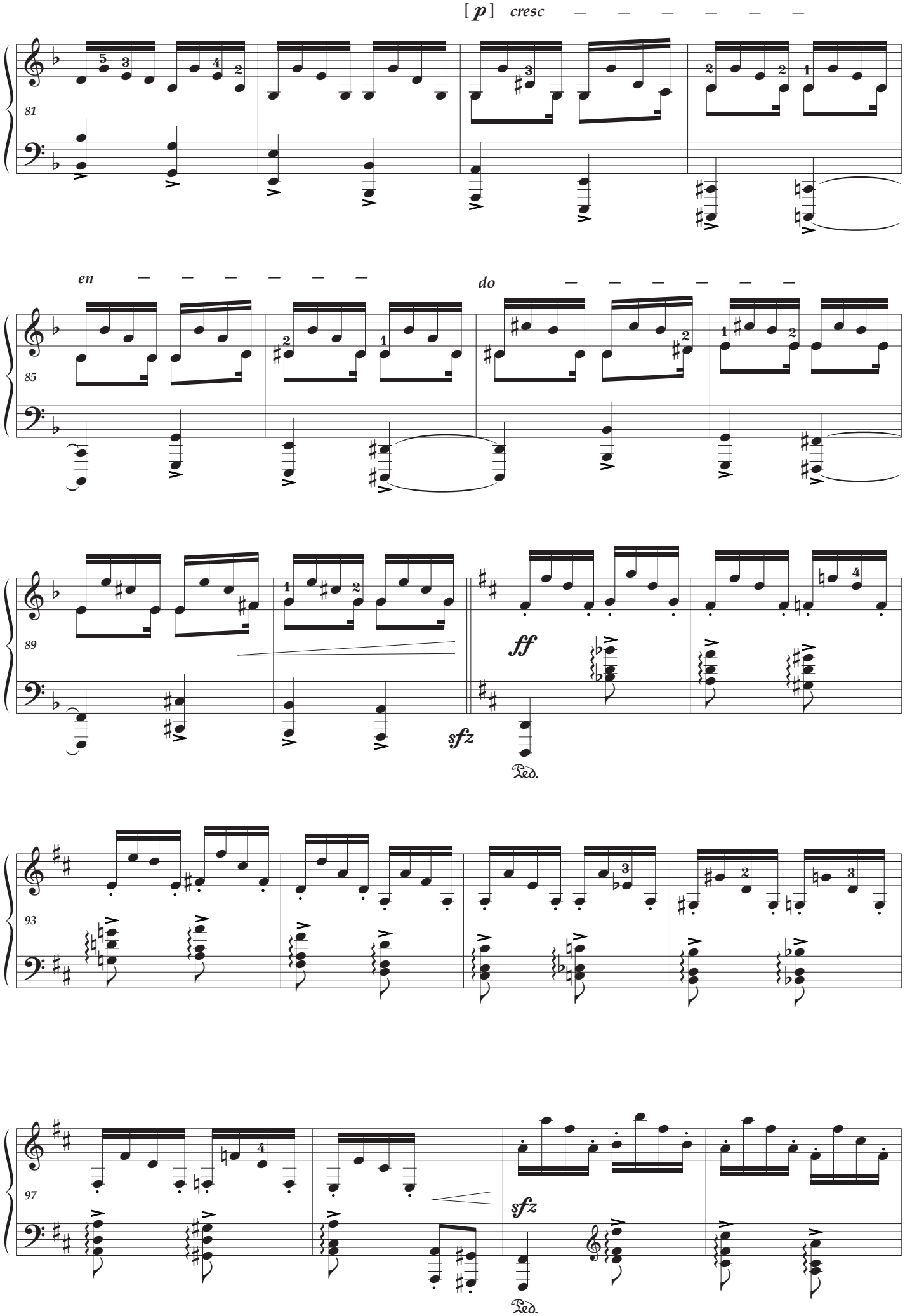
are often abandoned for the more appealing creation of something new. Admittedly, one can only guess at what might have been, but therein lies the true fascination and challenge for the performer and editor alike, and I have carried this one step further by putting my own present interpretation in print. For example, to make certain passages easier or more persuasivel have sometimes re-distributed the hands, included personal fingerings, and occasionally even tinkered with some notes and rhythms for better effect. Other important changes have been been made in the use of key signatures, phrasing, accents, staves, clefs and accidentals, and they are sometimes referred to in the appendix, which contains comments and afterthoughts. I always recommend constant reference to the *urtext* and other editions for comparison.

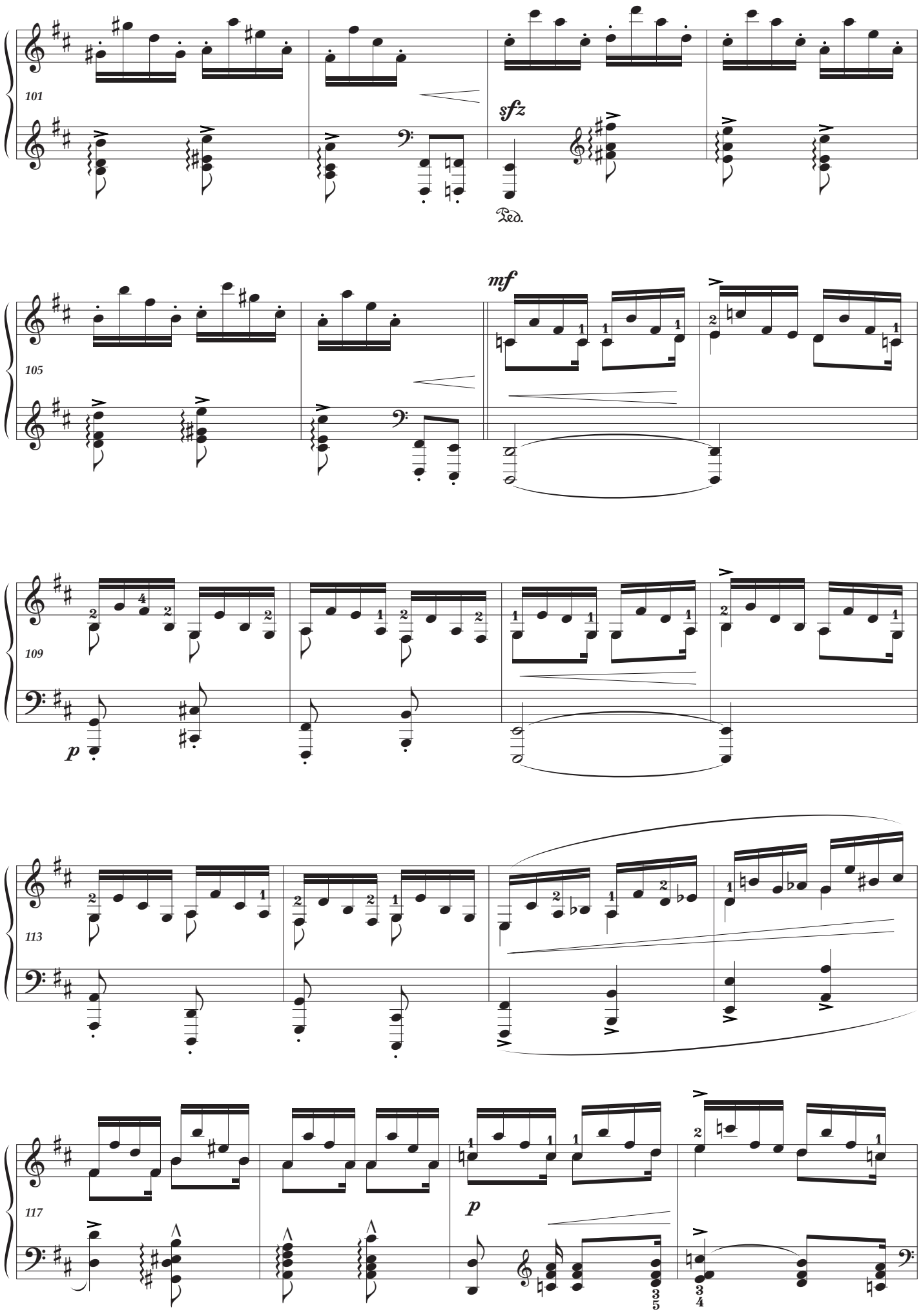

Vivace, con bravura
♩ = 138
ff
sfz
sopra
sotto
sopra
sotto
sopra
Ped.
5
sotto
sopra
sotto
sopra
9
sfz
Ped.
13
sfz
Ped.
17
mf

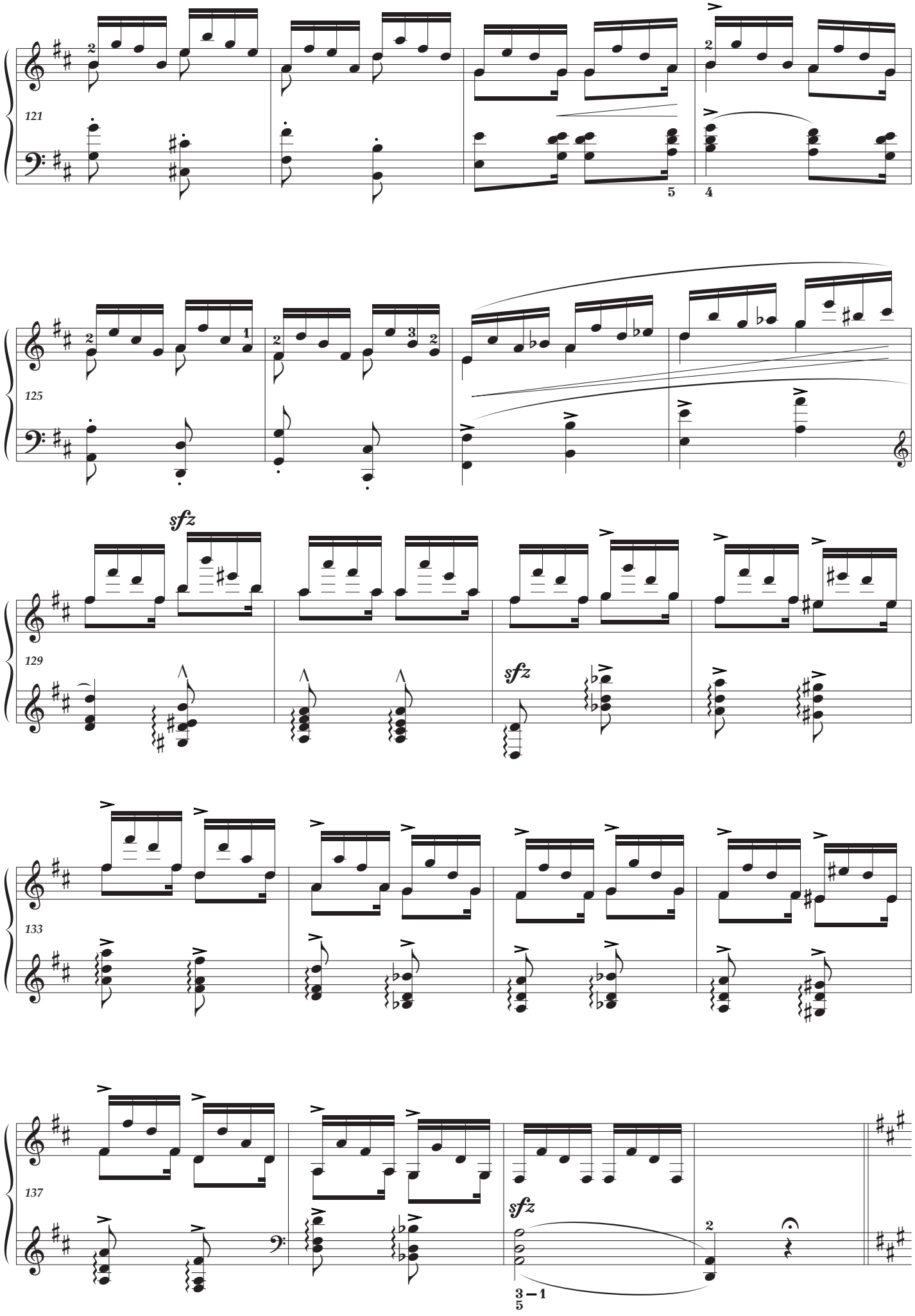

21
pp
25
29
33
37
sfz


41
45
pp
49
53
pp
57


61
sfz
65
69
73
77

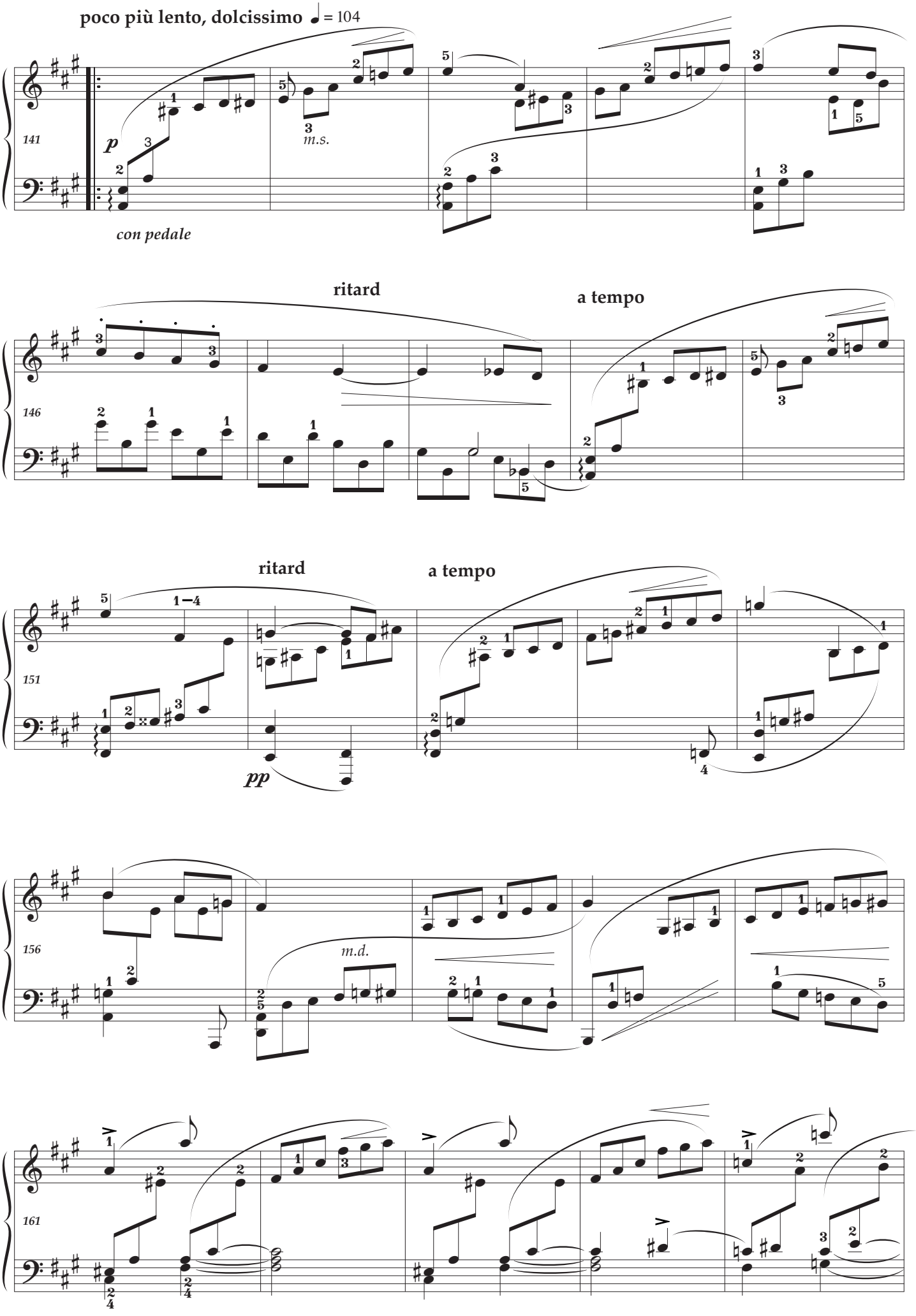

[p] cresc
81
en
do
85
89
ff
sfz
Ped.
93
97
sfz
Ped.

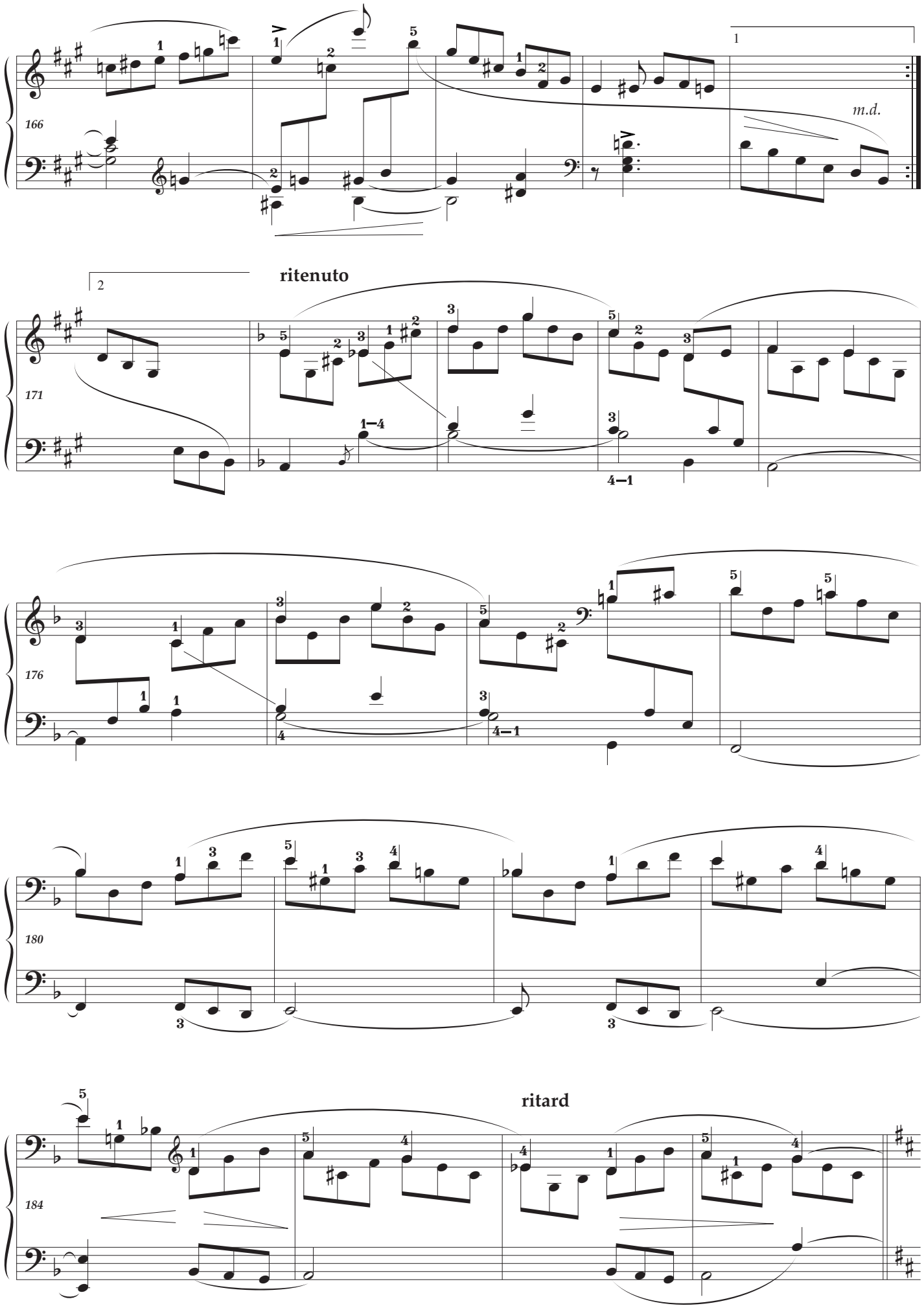

101
sfz
Ped.
105
mf
109
p
113
117
p

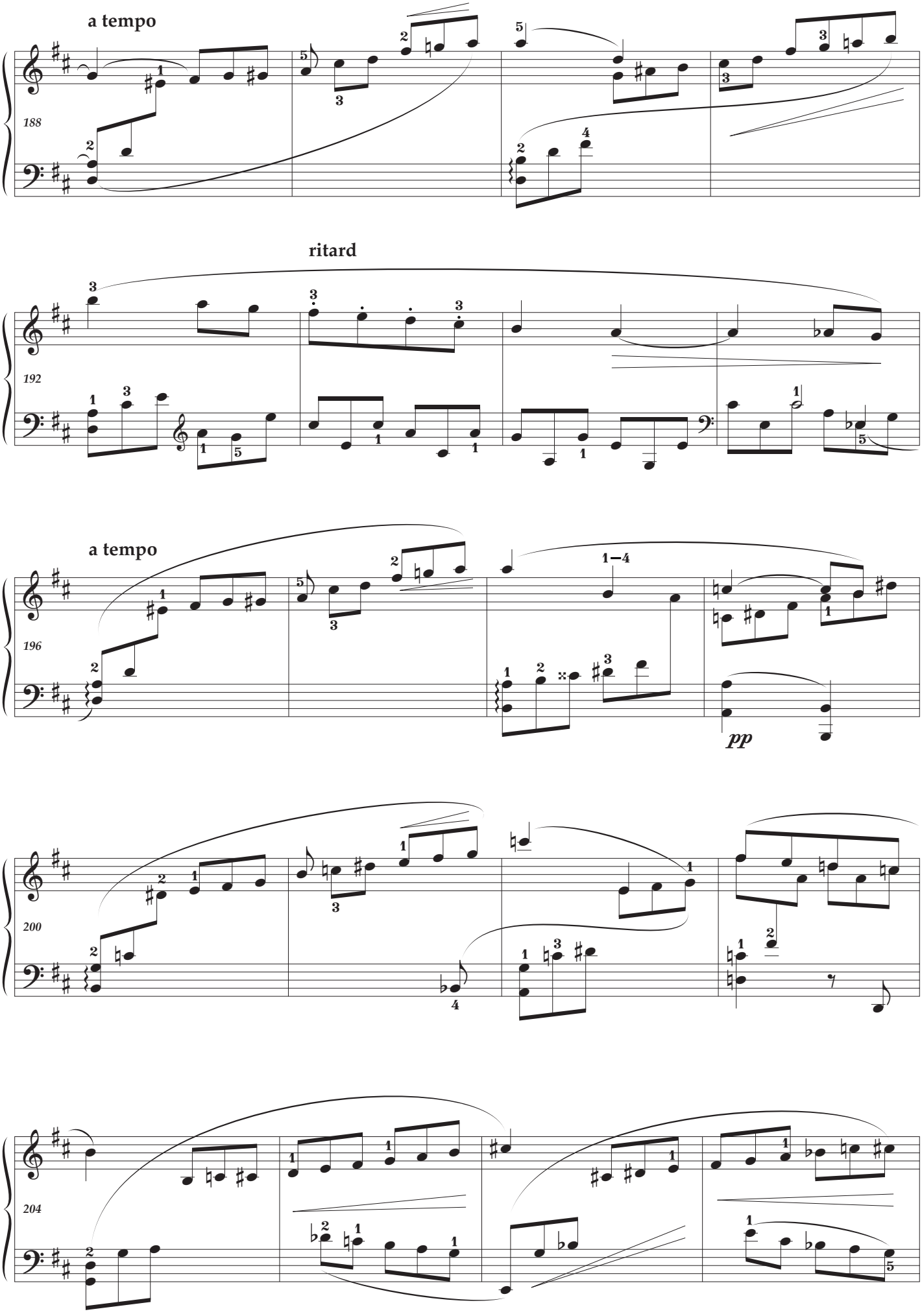

121
125
129
sfz
sfz
133
137
sfz

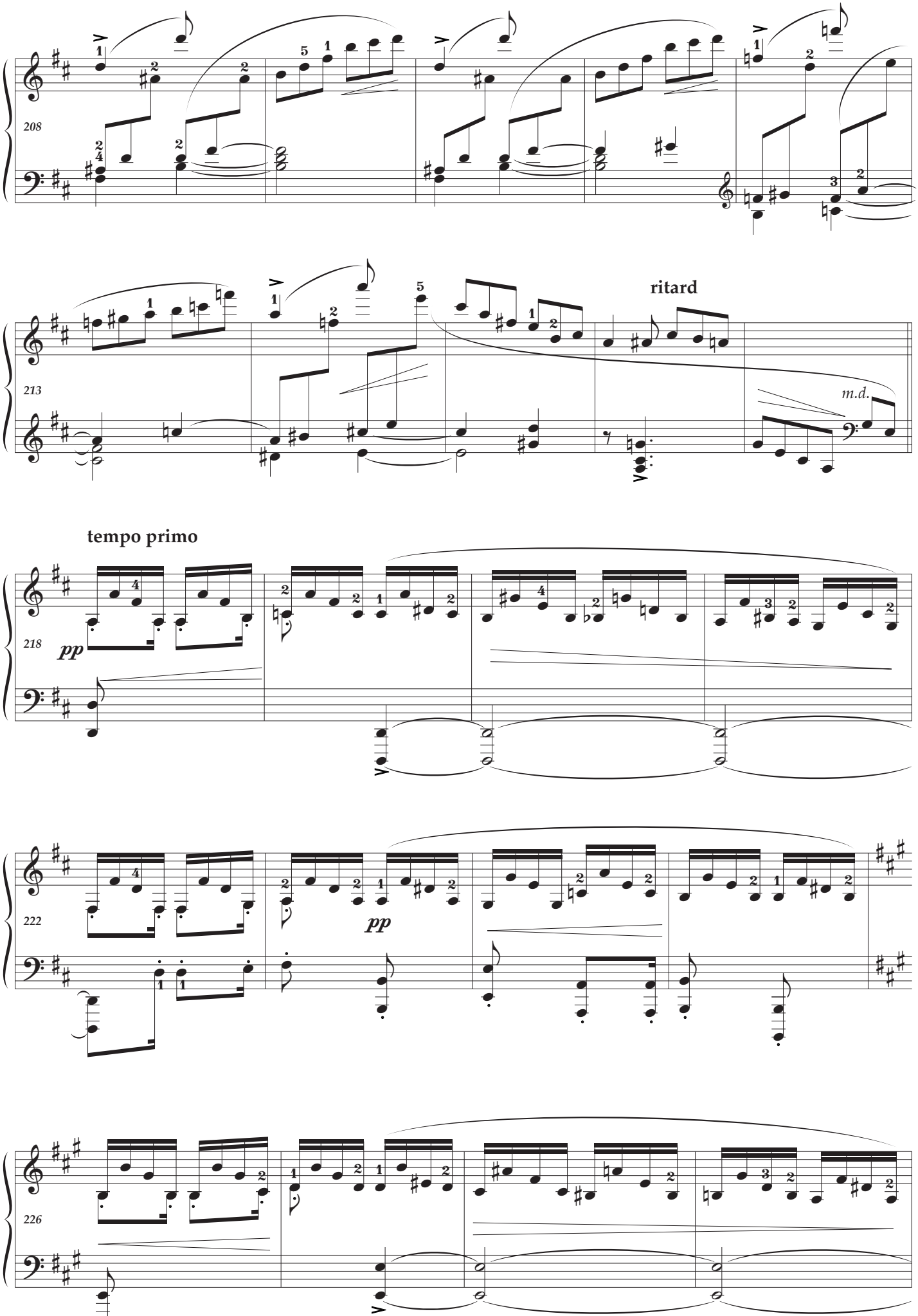
INTERMEZZO

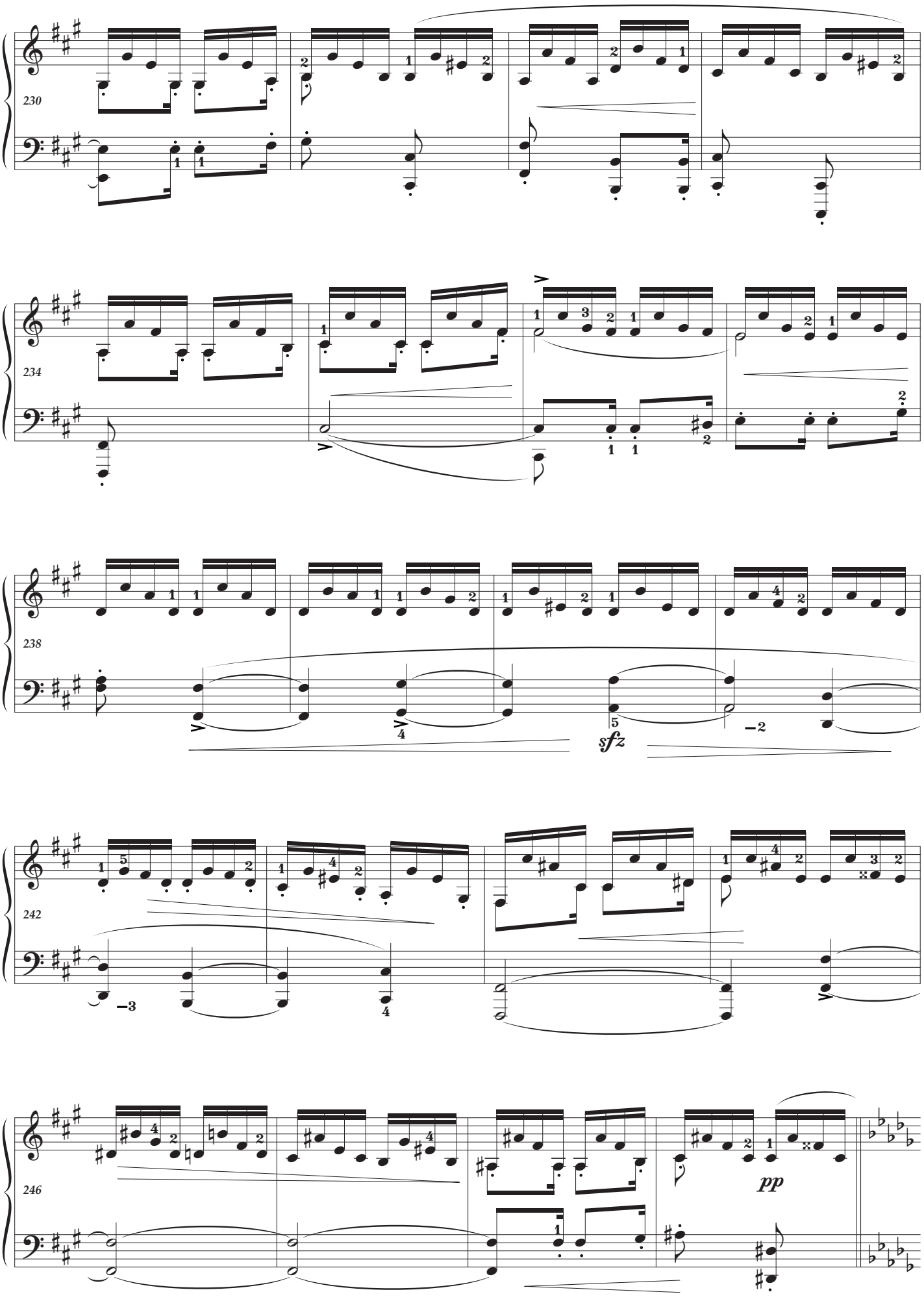
poco più lento, dolcissimo ♩ = 104

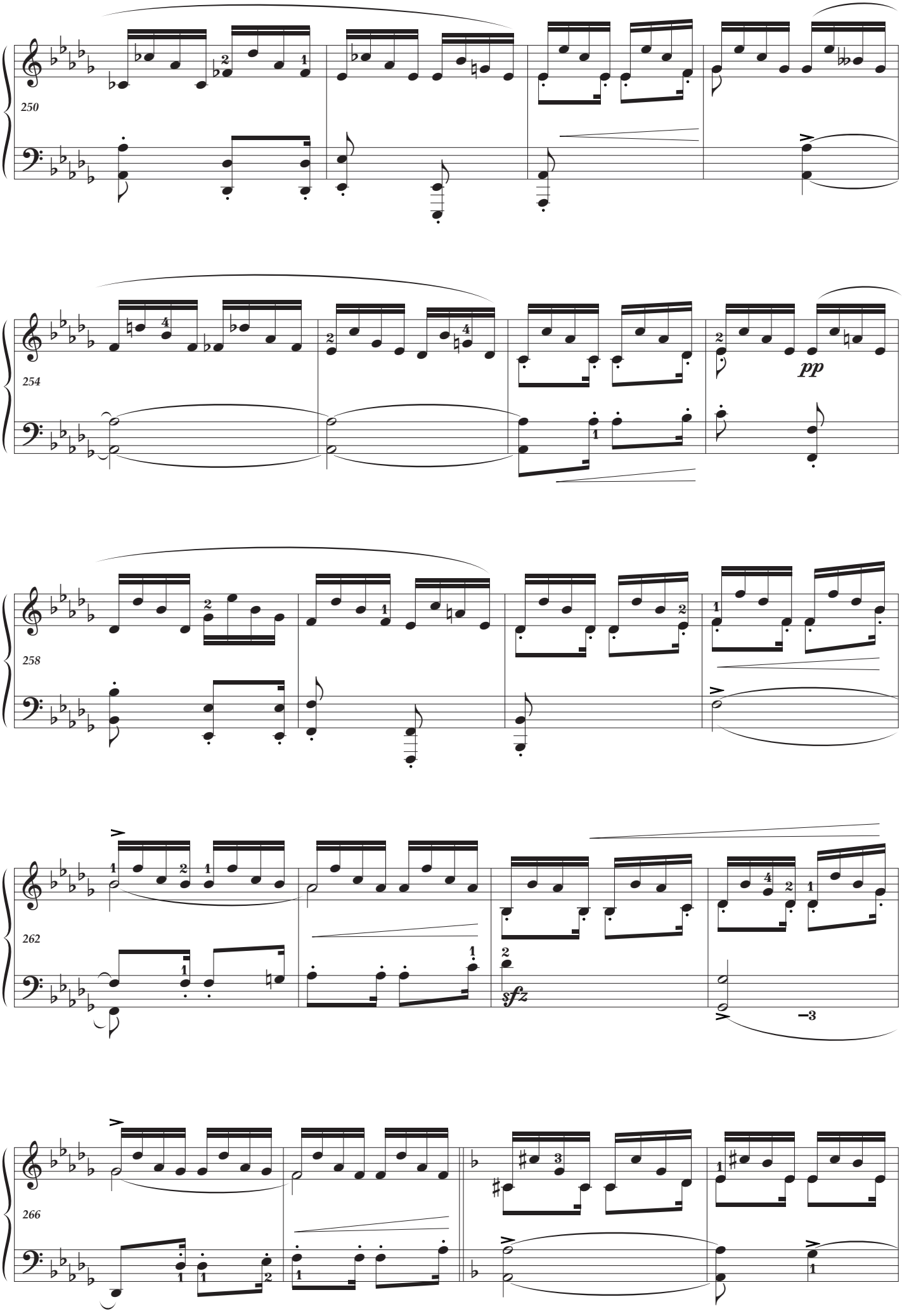


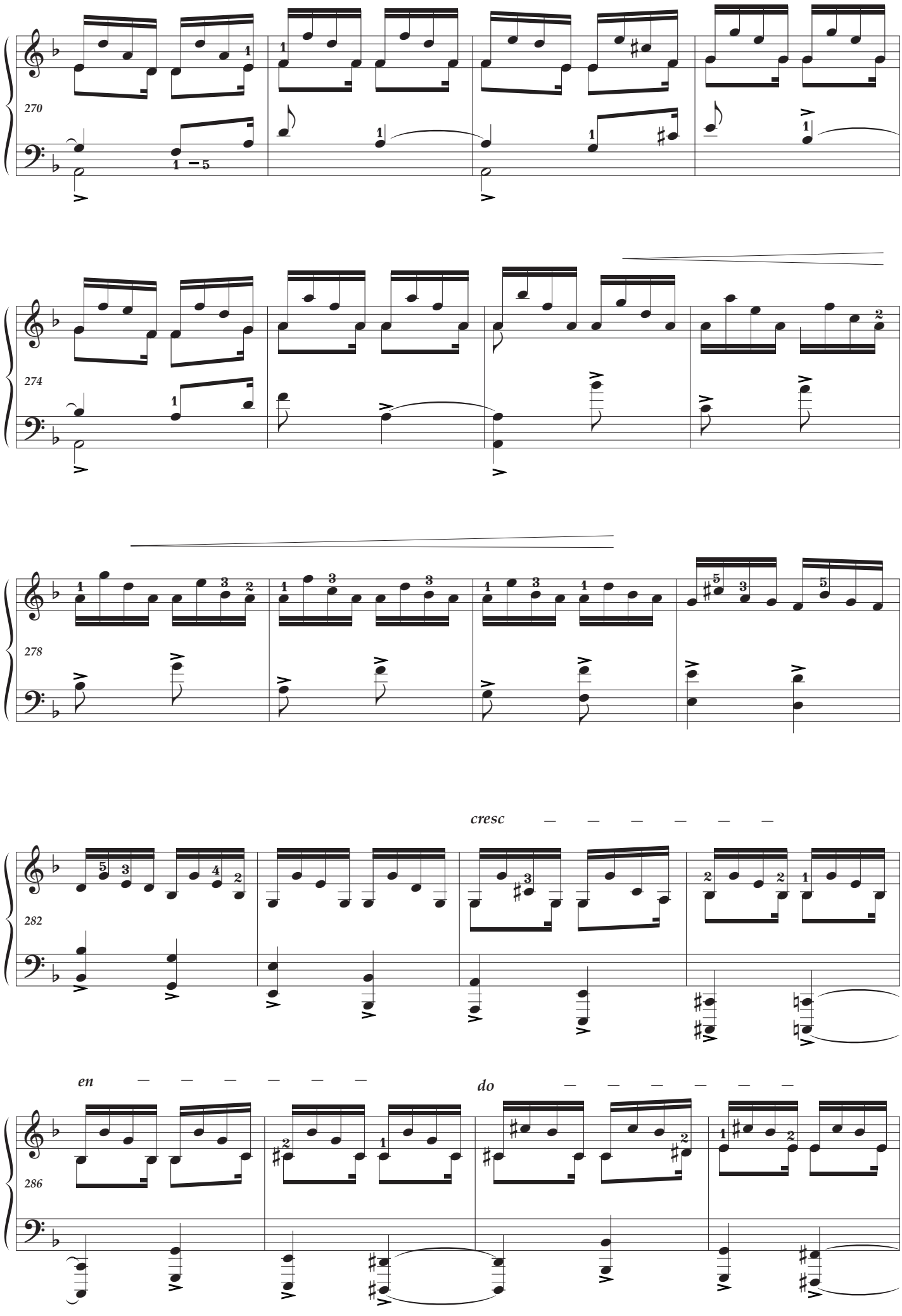

166
1
m.d.
2
ritenuto
171
1–4
4–1
176
4
4–1
180
3
3
184
ritard

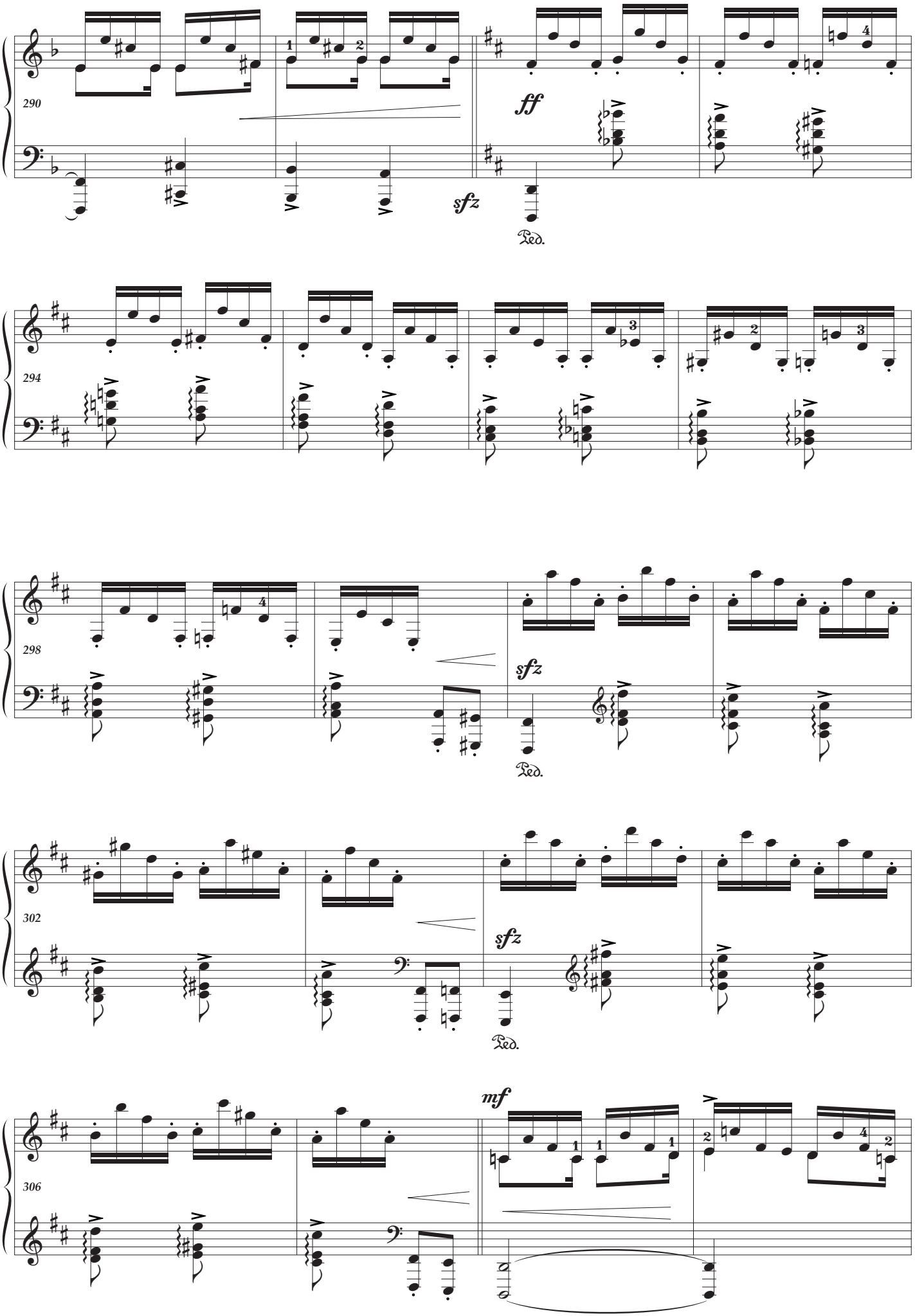

a tempo
188
ritard
192
a tempo
196
pp
200
204

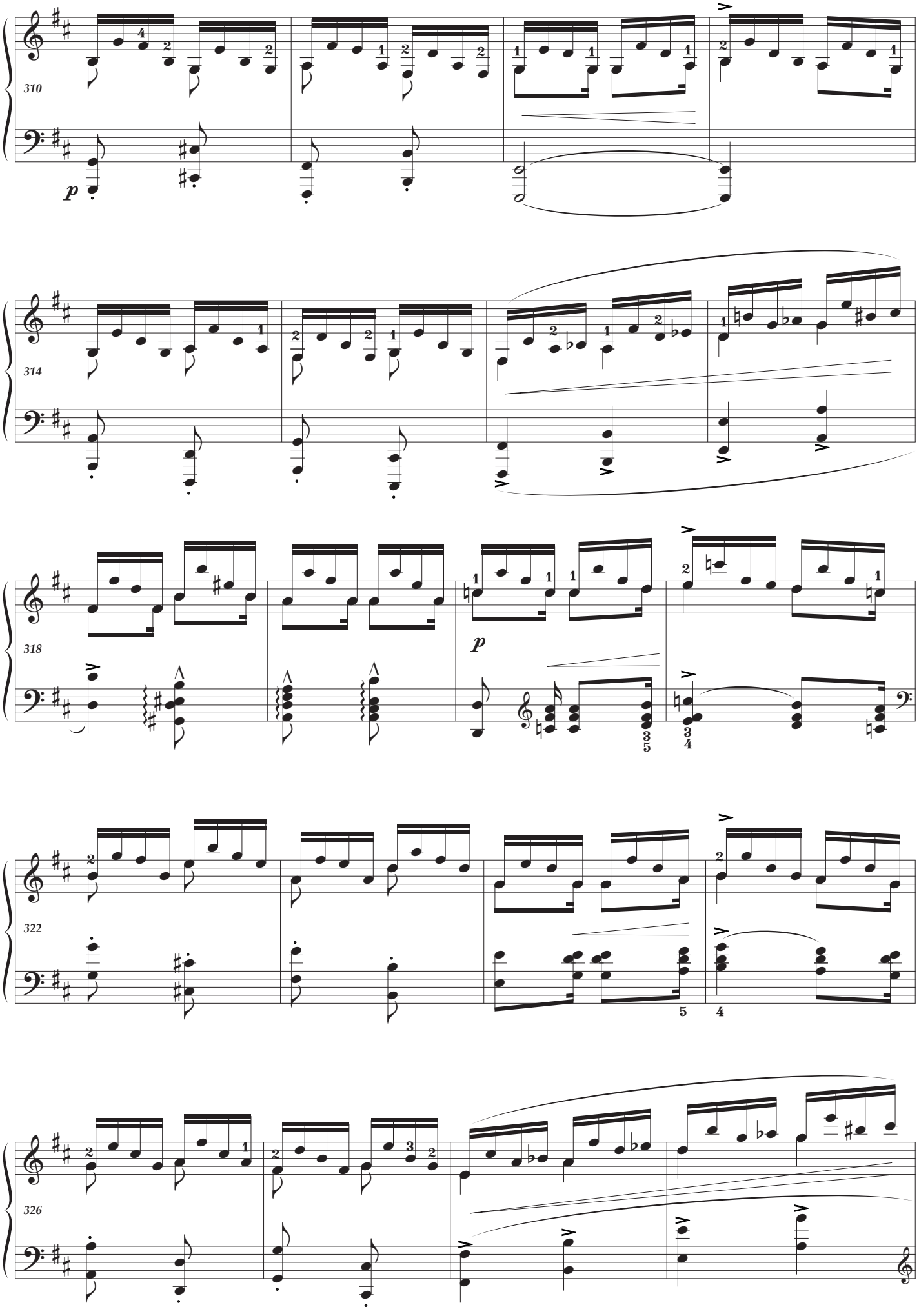

208
213
ritard
m.d.
tempo primo
218
pp
222
pp
226

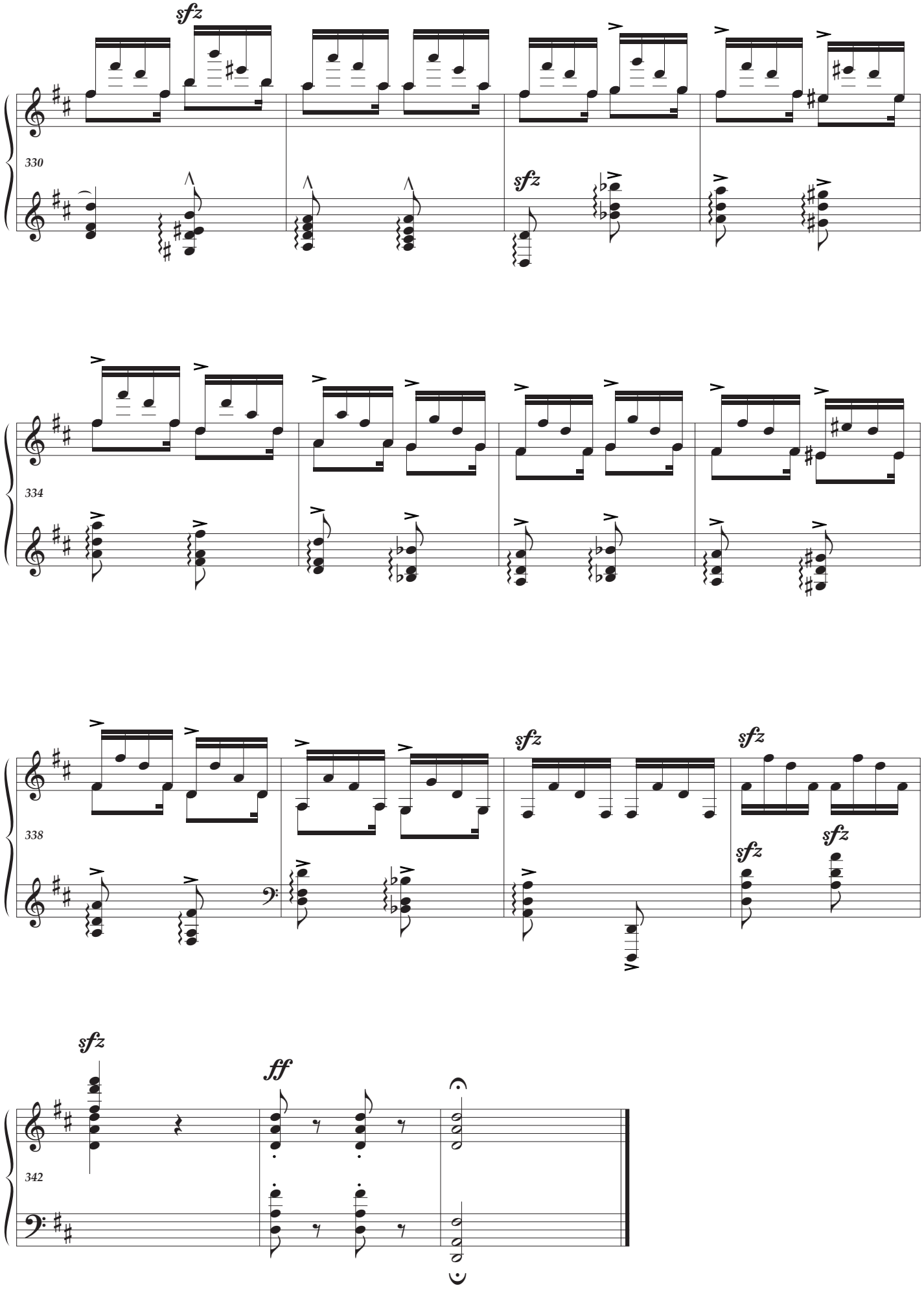

230
234
238
sfz
242
246
pp


250
254
pp
258
262
sfz
266


270
274
278
cresc
282
en
do
286


290
ff
sfz
Ped.
294
298
sfz
Ped.
302
sfz
Ped.
306
mf


310
p
314
318
p
322
326


sfz
330
sfz
334
338
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
342
sfz
ff

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Appendix

Comments and afterthoughts

- The Breitkopf & Härtel (Clara Schumann) edition gives an excessively fast metronome tempo of 𝅗𝅥 = 92 and then for the central *poco più lento* gives an incoherent ♩ = 104.
- The composer often writes ***f*** as a forced accent, replaced in this edition with the *marcato* (^) sign.
- **3** and **6** Top octave notes have been omitted in the original here and elsewhere
- **24** The bass at the 2nd beat is an octave higher in the original; compare with **32** and **50**.
- **61** and **65** Alto voice minims are editorial to correspond with **35**
- **148** and **195** L.H. minims editorial addition
- **149** *a tempo* markings are generally omitted by the composer
- **172** Voice direction lines have been inserted to show the melodic shape. The upper voice (perhaps Clara's part) acting as a 'shadow'.
- **340** Bass octave lower

Duration: 6'05

HOUSE IN ZWICKAU WHERE SCHUMANN WAS BORN.